

MEDIA PACKAGING SLEEVE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is a nonprovisional application claiming benefit of copending U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 60/397,100, filed July 20, 2002, for *Media Packaging Sleeve*. The copending provisional application is commonly assigned with this application and is hereby incorporated entirely herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to a packaging blank. In particular, the invention relates to a packaging blank capable of forming a sleeve that is useful in securing a sealed polymeric bag containing a degradable media article. The invention further relates to a package formed from the blank that includes a sealed polymeric bag.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The advances in media technology coupled with the popularity of sound and video recording have resulted in the packaging of large numbers of stored media articles, such as compact discs (CD) and digital video discs (DVD), for distribution, sale, and rental. The entertainment industry favors the distribution and promotion of substantially flat or near planar CDs and DVDs as compared

to the bulkier videocassette in VHS format because of packaging, shipping, and display efficiencies. Moreover, the CDs and DVDs are compatible for packaging with other goods such as magazines and consumables. Consequently, the packaging industry is attempting to meet increased demand by providing improved packaging tailored to substantially flat media articles (e.g., DVDs), and developing more efficient methods of packaging the same.

[0004] Recent advances in the DVD industry coupled with lower manufacturing costs have led to increased sales of DVD players. For example, according to recent surveys, one in four households owns a DVD player. Surveys indicate that consumers prefer the advantages in sound, quality, and durability that DVDS offer as compared to video cassettes. Likewise, DVD rentals have increased over the past several years. Media rental stores have consequently increased their inventory of DVDs. Nevertheless, consumers are often plagued by the time constraints imposed by rental stores. For example, most rental stores require that new releases be returned within two days. After two days, rental stores impose late fee penalties. Unfortunately, the policy and practices regarding late fees has been the subject of class action lawsuits.

[0005] Typically, families rent two or three movies, i.e., one or two for the kids and one for the parents. However, parents oftentimes do not have sufficient time to view their selected movie within the two or three day rental period. Consequently, a typical consumer either fails to watch the rented movie and returns it within the allotted

time, or watches the movie and returns it after the allotted rental time to face a late fee penalty.

[0006] In an effort to alleviate the logistic and financial burden placed on consumers of video entertainment, the DVD industry is investigating the concept of one-time viewing DVDs or one-time listening CDs. Specifically, the DVD industry is developing a disposable DVD that degrades within a pre-determined time period upon removal from sealed packaging. Specifically, an additive may be impregnated into the DVD and the DVD is then secured in a sealed airtight bag (e.g., a polymeric bag). For example, the DVD may include a layer of material that reacts with oxygen to render the DVD unusable after a pre-determined time period of exposure to the environment. The contents of the polymeric bag may also include an additive such as an oxygen inhibitor, preservative, stabilizer, inhibitor, absorbent, and desiccant. Because the bag must remain sealed until the desired viewing, the packaging must be capable of maintaining the airtight seal and preventing degradation of the DVD. Accordingly there is a need for packaging that is capable of securing a sealed bag containing a degradable media article.

[0007] The bag must also be capable of withstanding the rigors of shipping and handling, yet remain readily accessible to the consumer. Accordingly there is a need for packaging that provides easy access to the media article, yet prevents premature bag failure and resulting DVD degradation.

[0008] A known option for packaging this kind of degradable item is a stand-alone polymeric bag (i.e., a bag not contained within a packaging sleeve) that is capable of withstanding the rigors of the environment (e.g., shipping and consumer handling) and the application of an adhesive label. Bags of this type require a high-strength seal between the plastic layers to provide the desired protection. Briefly, the bond between the layers of polymeric material requires sufficient strengthening to compensate for the lack of protection afforded a bag contained within a packaging sleeve. Bags of this type require the use of a sharp tool such as scissors or a razor blade to open the packaging. In addition to being inconvenient, the use of these tools can be dangerous to the consumer and can damage the media article stored therein. Therefore, a package providing durability and ease of access is desirable.

[0009] Additionally, a stand-alone polymeric bag with an adhesive label as described above offers very limited display area for graphic information containing required legal information and artwork to promote consumer point-of-purchase buying decisions. Therefore it is desirable to create a sleeve that meets the functional requirements of the package and provides ample display area for critical legal and sales information.

[0010] Moreover, most packaging sleeves lack a retaining panel capable of securing a sealed polymeric bag, and that facilitates frontal access to an article positioned in the bag. Further, most packaging sleeves lack a retaining panel capable of causing bag failure when the retaining

panel is separated from the sleeve. Accordingly, there is a need for a packaging sleeve suitable for securing a polymeric bag containing a DVD that permits frontal access to an article positioned therein, and that facilitates bag failure upon opening.

[0011] Several types of sleeves lack windows that permit a view of the packaged article and any information (e.g., DVD title) printed on the media article. Without such a window, it is not obvious that the package contains the media article it carries. This often results in the recipient discarding a package without the knowledge that it contains a valuable media article. In the case of degradable media items, product expiration that might occur in the event of bag failure may be indicated by a change in color of the media item. A package that provides visual access to the product would likely reduce the costs and consumer frustration associated with the selling of expired products. Therefore, it is desirable to provide a packaging blank capable of forming a sleeve that includes at least one display window that permits viewing of an article contained therein.

[0012] Product theft of this kind of article is a significant problem. The retail market has addressed this problem through the use of security tags concealed in the packaging that must be de-activated during checkout to prevent the triggering of an alarm when the product passes through sensors at a store exit. Unfortunately polymeric bags fail to provide for the concealment of security tags. Thus, it is desirable to create a packaging sleeve that provides areas for concealing such tags.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide packaging that is capable of securing a sealed bag containing a degradable media article.

[0014] Yet another object of the invention is the provision of a sleeve that provides easy access to the media article, yet prevents premature degradation of the media article prior to a desired viewing time.

[0015] A further object of the invention is the provision of a sleeve that promotes frontal access to an article and causes bag failure.

[0016] Another object of the invention is to maximize the advertising space on a sleeve.

[0017] The invention meets these objectives with a packaging blank capable of forming a sleeve that is useful in securing a sealed polymeric bag containing a degradable media article. In particular, the invention is a packaging sleeve having an internal cavity and at least one display window that provides a view of the polymeric bag and its contents upon construction.

[0018] The foregoing and other objects and advantages of the invention and the manner in which the same are accomplished will become clearer based on the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the packaging sleeve formed from the packaging blank as used in connection with a merchandise display rack.

[0020] Figure 2 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the packaging sleeve formed from the packaging blank displaying a DVD contained within a polymeric bag that is secured to the bottom panel and retaining panel, and a top panel including a tear strip and display window

[0021] Figure 3 is a top plan view of the packaging blank illustrating the top panel, bottom panel, retaining panel, glue flaps, top panel display window, retaining panel display window, tear strip, and plastic bag.

[0022] Figure 4A is a perspective view of the invention depicting the placement of the DVD and plastic bag on the bottom panel.

[0023] Figure 4B is a perspective view of the invention depicting the glue flaps being folded over and secured to the plastic bag containing the DVD.

[0024] Figure 4C is a perspective view of the invention depicting the retaining panel being folded over and secured to the glue flaps, polymeric bag, and bottom panel.

[0025] Figure 4D is a perspective view of the invention depicting the top panel being folded over and secured to the retaining panel.

[0026] Figure 5A is a perspective view of the invention depicting a consumer grasping the access tap adjacent the tear strip and removing the tear strip from the top panel to gain access to the retaining panel.

[0027] Figure 5B is a perspective view of the invention depicting a consumer inserting a finger into an access opening formed in the retaining panel, separating the retaining panel from the bottom panel, and breaking the seal of the plastic bag to thereby expose the DVD to the environment and gain access to the DVD.

[0028] Figure 5C is a perspective view of the invention depicting the user removing the DVD from the plastic bag.

[0029] Figure 6A is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the invention depicting the placement of the DVD and plastic bag on the bottom panel.

[0030] Figure 6B is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the invention depicting the retaining panel being folded over and secured to the bottom panel and plastic bag.

[0031] Figure 6C is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the invention depicting the top panel being folded over and secured to the retaining panel.

[0032] Figure 7 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the invention depicting a consumer inserting a finger into an access opening formed in the retaining panel, separating the retaining panel from the bottom panel, and breaking the seal of the polymeric bag to

thereby expose the DVD to the environment and gain access to the DVD.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0033] The present invention will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which a preferred embodiment of the invention is shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0034] For ease of reference, the term "article" as used herein will refer to a media item, and more particularly to a CD or DVD. Nevertheless it will be understood that the article may include any number of substantially flat or near planar articles that are not necessarily media items. It will be further understood by those skilled in the art that as used herein, the term CD refers to a stored media article made of single-piece construction. Further, the term DVD refers to a stored media article made of multi-piece construction, thereby allowing increased storage capacity.

[0035] It will be understood that as used herein the term "blank" refers to a folding carton having undergone cutting and creasing operations, but not yet having undergone

folding and gluing operations. The blank may be formed of cardboard, rigid paper, flexible plastic, or similar products made of paperboard or plastic. In particular, the packaging industry favors the use of one-piece flexible blanks, which are readily incorporated into automated processes for forming sleeves and packaging cartons.

[0036] It will be understood that the term "sleeve" refers to a folding carton that is substantially flat or near planar. Stated differently, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that a sleeve refers to a folding carton having little to no depth.

[0037] The term "flap" refers to a secondary blank element that is typically hinge-connected along a free edge of a panel or another flap.

[0038] It will also be understood that the term "panel" refers to the major component part of a folding sleeve or carton and defines the major partition elements of the blank. As used herein, the term "panel" as defined above is used in conjunction with the packaging blank and the packaging sleeve formed from the blank and refers to components of the blank and resulting sleeve.

[0039] With reference to the orientation of the invention in Figure 3, it will be further understood by those skilled in the art that the term "length" refers to a distance measured from the uppermost edge of a panel or flap to the lowermost edge of the panel or flap. Still referring to Figure 3, it will be further understood that the term "width" refers to a distance measured from the left edge of a panel or flap to the right edge of a panel or flap.

[0040] It will be understood by those of skill in the art that the terms "top panel" and "bottom panel" are also referred to as "front panel" and "back panel" in the packaging industry depending upon the orientation of the blank or sleeve with respect to a horizontal plane. Further, it will be understood that the relative terms "front panel" and "back panel" may often be referred to as "back panel" and "front panel", respectively, depending upon the orientation of the blank or sleeve with respect to the position of an observer relative to the orientation of the blank or sleeve. Moreover, it will be understood that the relative terms "left" and "right", and "top" and "bottom" may be referred to as a "right" and "left", and "bottom" and "top", interchangeably, depending upon the orientation of the blank or sleeve with respect to the position of an observer relative to the orientation of the blank or sleeve.

[0041] The term "tab" refers to a tertiary element of the blank or carton that is generally hinged to a portion of a free edge of a panel, flap, or portion of a panel or flap, or struck from within the plane of a panel or flap.

[0042] As used herein, it will be understood that the term "finished" means coated with a material to produce an attractive glossy finish. The term "finished" will also be understood to mean the inclusion of printed material or other identifying indicia (e.g., a company's logo, instructions, or directions for opening the sleeve formed from the blank).

[0043] It will be further appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that, as used herein, the concept of a panel being "between" two other panels does not necessarily imply that the three panels or walls are contiguous (i.e., in intimate contact). Rather, as used herein, the concept of one panel being between two other panels is meant to describe the relative positions of the panels within the blank or sleeve structure, respectively. Similarly, as used herein, the concept of a first panel being connected to a second panel by a third panel, "opposite" the second panel, merely describes the relative positions of the first and second panels within the blank structure.

[0044] An overall view of the packaging blank 10 formed into a sleeve 11 that is useful in securing a sealed polymeric bag 12 containing a substantially flat or near planar article 13 (e.g., DVD) that incorporates features of the present invention is set forth in Figure 1. As depicted in Figure 3, a preferred embodiment of the packaging blank 10 includes a top panel 14, a bottom panel 15, a retaining panel 20, and a pair of glue flaps 21.

[0045] The bottom panel 15 is defined by a top boundary 22, bottom boundary 23, left boundary 24, and a right boundary 25. In a preferred embodiment, the pair of glue flaps 21 is attached to the left boundary 24 and right boundary 25 of the bottom panel 15. As illustrated in Figure 4B, the glue flaps 21 are foldable over the bottom panel 15 and are used to secure the retaining panel 20 to the bottom panel as discussed herein and depicted in Figure 4C. The retaining panel 20 may be selectively secured to the glue

flaps 21, for example, with a variety of adhesives 26 to include glue or fugitive glue as illustrated in Figure 3.

[0046] As illustrated in Figures 6A-7, an alternative embodiment of packaging blank 16 likewise includes a top panel 14, a bottom panel 15 having a top boundary 22 and a bottom boundary 23, and a retaining panel 20 having a left boundary 30 and a right boundary 31.

[0047] With reference to the orientation of the blank 10 depicted in Figure 3, the retaining panel 20 is connected to the bottom panel 15 at the bottom boundary 23 of the bottom panel. Accordingly, the retaining panel 20 is foldable over the bottom panel 15 at a common or first fold line 32 to form an interior sleeve cavity 33. The length of the retaining panel 20 is preferably less than the length of the top and bottom panels 14, 15 so that the top panel is capable of being folded over and adjacent to the retaining panel without being hindered by, for example, a free edge of the retaining panel. See Figures 4C and 4D.

[0048] Referring to Figures 3 and 4A, the retaining panel 20 of the packaging blank 10 further defines a least one access opening 34 for facilitating the separation of the retaining panel from the bottom panel 15 and the polymeric bag 12 as discussed herein. For example, during construction the polymeric bag 12 may be selectively secured to the bottom panel 15 with adhesive 26 and the glue flaps 21 may then be folded over the bottom panel 15. See Figures 4A and 4B. Next, the retaining panel 20 is folded over and selectively secured to the bag 12, glue flaps 21, and bottom panel 15. See Figure 4C. The access

opening 34 is preferably formed adjacent an outer edge of a free end of the retaining panel 20 for easy access by the consumer. In a preferred embodiment of the blank 10 illustrated in Figure 3, the retaining panel 20 is formed at a corner of the free end of the retaining panel. As configured, the access opening 34 provides a consumer with frontal access to the substantially flat or near planar article, for example, a DVD 13 contained within the sealed polymeric bag 12 that may be placed in the sleeve cavity 33 formed when the blank 10 is constructed into a sleeve 11.

[0049] The polymeric bag 12 is preferably constructed of two sheets of polymeric material composed of material that facilitates their separation by the end-user when they are sealed together, for example, by a heating mechanism. A seal utilizing this type of material provides sufficient strength to securely seal the edges of a polymeric bag that is contained within and protected by a packaging sleeve, yet permits a consumer to break the sealed edges with less effort than required to break the seals of a stand-alone polymeric bag discussed above. Preferably, at least three edges of the polymeric bag 12 include seals at the outermost perimeter of the bag. At least one edge of the bag 12 includes a seal that is spaced apart from the outermost perimeter of the bag. Stated differently, at least one edge of the polymeric bag 12 includes two free ends of polymeric material. Upon construction, the edge of the polymeric bag that includes the free ends (i.e., the edge having the seal that is spaced apart from the outermost perimeter of the bag) is adjacent the access opening 34. Further, the free ends of the sheet extend

slightly beyond the access opening 34 and are readily accessible by the consumer.

[0050] It is known that two sheets of polymeric material that form a less tacky seal are more readily separable than two sheets of polymeric material that are sealed with a high strength bond. Thus, the stronger the seal, the more effort required to access an article sealed in the bag. Excessive effort and/or the use of sharp tools on the part of the consumer attempting to gain access to the article in the sealed bag leads to damage of the article itself or injury to the consumer. Moreover, the seals of the stand-alone bags discussed above are generally stronger than the top and bottom surfaces of the bags. Thus, the surfaces tend to break more readily than the seals. Openings in the bag surfaces (i.e., areas other than at the sealed edges) tend to be uneven and prevent ready access to the article. Stated differently, it is easier to access a substantially flat or planar article 13 through an open edge of the bag 12 (i.e., an edge having broken seals) as compared to the top and bottom surfaces.

[0051] Accordingly, the sealed polymeric bag 12 of the present invention that incorporates a less tacky seal 26 for bonding its edges and that is protected by a packaging sleeve 11, provides for easier access to an article 13 contained therein as compared to a stand-alone polymeric bag that incorporates high strength adhesive to compensate for the lack of protection provided by a packaging sleeve. Further, the free ends of the sealed bag 12 permit the application of color-coding or printed directions for the benefit of the consumer. It would be advantageous for the

sealed polymeric bag to be constructed with a top layer differing in color from the bottom. This would allow the free ends of the polymeric bag 12 that extend beyond the access opening 34 to be more readily seen by the consumer and allow the sleeve to include printed directions such as "Pull Red Flap" making the intended function of the package much more obvious to the consumer.

[0052] With reference to an alternative embodiment of the packaging blank 16 illustrated in Figures 6A-6C, the retaining panel 20 likewise defines an access opening 34 for facilitating the separation of the retaining panel 20 from the bottom panel 15 and polymeric bag 12 as discussed herein. This configuration provides a useful means for facilitating the separation of a portion of the retaining panel 20 from the bottom panel 15 when the packaging blank 16 is formed into a sleeve 11.

[0053] The top panel 14 of the preferred embodiment is positioned on the blank 10 opposite the retaining panel 20 and is connected to the bottom panel 15 at the top boundary 22 of the bottom panel. See Figure 3. In this configuration, the top panel 14 is foldable over the bottom panel 15 and retaining panel 20 at a fold line common to the bottom panel and top panel or a second fold line 35. See Figures 4C-4D.

[0054] In a preferred embodiment depicted in Figures 4A-4D, the polymeric bag 12 is contained within the sleeve cavity 33. The polymeric bag 12 is selectively secured with adhesive 26 to the bottom panel 15 and the retaining panel 20 such that the polymeric bag fails when the retaining

panel is unfolded from the bottom panel. Stated differently, the strength of the adhesive bond between the retaining panel 20 and the bag 12 is greater than the strength of the material of which the bag is constructed.

[0055] As shown in Figures 6A-6C, and 7 illustrating the alternative embodiment, the polymeric bag 12 is likewise contained within the sleeve cavity 33 and selectively secured with adhesive 26 to the bottom panel 15 and the retaining panel 20 such that the polymeric bag fails when the retaining panel is unfolded from the bottom panel.

[0056] As depicted in Figure 3, the top panel 14 and the retaining panel 20 each define at least one display window 40, 41. An alternative embodiment of the preferred blank 10 may include a plurality of windows (not shown). The top panel display window 40 and the retaining panel display window 41 are positioned on the top panel 14 and the retaining panel 20, respectively, such that the interior sleeve cavity 33 and its contents are viewable through the top panel display window and the retaining panel display window when the packaging blank 10 is formed into a sleeve 11.

[0057] For example, in a preferred embodiment, the consumer is able to view the polymeric bag 12 and the DVD 13 contained therein through the top panel display window 40 and retaining panel display window 41. As illustrated in the preferred embodiment of Figure 3, the top panel display window 40 and retaining panel display window 41 are substantially circular. Nevertheless, it will be understood that the top panel display window 40 and

retaining panel display window 41 are not limited to a circular shape and may be, for example, rectangular, oval, polygonal, semi-circular, or elliptical.

[0058] In the alternative embodiment depicted in Figure 6A, the bottom panel 15 defines at least one display window 47 such that the interior sleeve cavity 33 and its contents are viewable through the bottom panel display window when the packaging blank 16 is formed into a sleeve 11.

[0059] Preferably, the bottom panel 15 and the retaining panel 20 are symmetrical with respect to one another. In another preferred embodiment, the top panel 14, bottom panel 15, and retaining panel 20 are symmetrical with respect to one another. See Figure 3. Nevertheless, it will be understood that the top panel 14, bottom panel 15, and retaining panel 20 are not limited to a rectangular shape and may, for example, be oval, polygonal, or elliptical.

[0060] Advantageously, the construction of the packaging blank 10 and the resulting sleeve 11 produced therefrom, permits the top panel 14 and bottom panel 15 to define a hanging means. As shown in Figure 1, the hanging means provides a useful means to hang the packaging blank 10 when it is constructed into a sleeve 11. In a preferred embodiment, the top panel 14 and bottom panel 15 each include a rectangular shaped cut-out 42, 43. In another embodiment, the top panel cut-out 42 and bottom panel cut-out 43 may be hook-shaped. It will be understood that the term "hook-shaped" as used in this description of the cut-out encompasses any number of shaped cut-outs that permit

the hanging of the packaging blank 10, upon construction into the packaging sleeve 11, from a conventional merchandise rack. For example, the cut-out may be L-shaped or J-shaped. In alternative embodiments, the top panel cut-out 42 and bottom panel cut-out 43 may be T-shaped, oval-shaped, or may be circular in shape. Furthermore, it will be understood that the cut-outs may include, but are not limited to, a slit, a slot, or a hole formed in the top and bottom panels 14, 15.

[0061] As depicted in Figures 2, 4C, and 4D, the top panel cut-out 42 and bottom panel cut-out 43 are aligned to correspondingly form a single cut-out 44 when the top panel 14 is folded over and against the bottom panel 15 and the retaining panel 20.

[0062] The top panel 14 of the preferred embodiment further provides a tear strip 45 for assisting in the opening of the constructed sleeve 11. As shown in Figures 5A and 5B, the tear strip 45 facilitates the separation of the top panel 14 from the retaining panel 20 once the top panel is folded over and selectively secured to the retaining panel and glue flaps 21. The tear strip 45 may be formed by a plurality of perforations or die-cuts 46 extending the width of the top panel 14. The perforations or die-cuts 46 may be formed by a scoring or die-cutting machine. In a preferred embodiment depicted in Figure 3 and 5A, the tear strip 45 is formed substantially parallel to an uppermost edge of the top panel 14 and the second fold line 35. Nevertheless, it will be understood that the tear strip 45 does not necessarily have to be formed parallel to any edge of the top panel 14 or second fold line 35. Further it

will be understood that the tear strip 45 does not necessarily have to extend the width of the top panel 14. Thus, the tear strip 45 may be formed anywhere on the top panel 14 and extend in any direction that permits the separation of the top panel from the retaining panel 20 and bottom panel 15 when the tear strip is separated from the top panel. In this configuration, the tear strip 45 provides a consumer with ready access to the internal portion of the sleeve panels as illustrated in Figures 5A-5C. Stated differently, the tear strip 45 allows the consumer access to the retaining panel 20 that secures the polymeric bag 12 containing a DVD 13 when the blank 10 is constructed into a sleeve 11.

[0063] The tear strip 45 provides an access tab 50 formed at one end of the tear strip for facilitating the removal of the tear strip from the top panel 14 and the eventual opening of the packaging sleeve 11.

[0064] In the alternative embodiment depicted in Figure 6B, the retaining panel 20 defines at least one tear line 51 that is spaced apart from the left boundary 30 and right boundary 31 of the retaining panel. The tear line 51 may be formed by a plurality of perforations or die-cuts 46 extending the length of the retaining panel 20. The perforations or die-cuts 46 may be formed by a scoring or die-cutting machine. As shown, the tear line 51 is preferably formed substantially parallel to the left boundary 30 and right boundary 31 of the retaining panel 20. Nevertheless, it will be understood that the tear line 51 does not necessarily have to be formed parallel to any boundary of the retaining panel 20. Further it will be

understood that the tear line 51 does not necessarily have to extend the length of the retaining panel 20. Thus, the tear line 51 may be formed anywhere on the retaining panel 20 and extend in any direction that permits the separation of the retaining panel from the bottom panel 15 when the retaining panel is lifted.

[0065] In this configuration of the alternative embodiment of the invention, the tear line 51 provides a means for separating a portion of the retaining panel 20 from the bottom panel 15 such that the polymeric bag fails when the retaining panel is unfolded from the bottom panel. See Figures 6A-6C, and 7.

[0066] As stated above, the alternative embodiment of the retaining panel 20 defines an access opening 34. Preferably the access opening 34 is spaced apart from the first fold line 32 and adjacent the tear line 51. This configuration permits the consumer to initiate the destruction of the tear line 51 and separation of the retaining panel 20 from the bottom panel 15 by grasping the access opening 34 and pulling the retaining panel away from the bottom panel.

[0067] With reference to Figures 5A, 5B, and 5C, the polymeric bag 12 is substantially air-tight, such that its failure exposes the interior of the polymeric bag to the environment. For example, in a preferred embodiment, the polymeric bag 12 contains a degradable media article 13 such as a DVD or CD that becomes unusable after a predetermined time of exposure to the environment. For example, the DVD 13 may include a coating of material that

reacts with oxygen to render the DVD unusable after a twenty-four hour time period. The contents of the polymeric bag 12 may also include an additive such as a preservative, stabilizer, inhibitor, absorbent, and desiccant.

[0068] As illustrated in the preferred embodiment of Figure 3, the packaging blank 10 may be a one-piece flexible blank formed from a flexible material. The flexible blank further includes an external planar side 52 and an internal planar side 53. The external planar side 52 is preferably finished.

[0069] In use, as illustrated in Figures 5A and 5C, the preferred embodiment of sleeve 11 formed from the blank 10 permits the consumer to grasp the access tab 50 on the top panel 14 adjacent the tear strip 45, lift the tear strip upwardly and away from the top panel to tear the perforations 46, thereby permitting the top panel to separate from the retaining panel 20, and providing access to the retaining panel. Upon removing the tear strip 45, the sleeve 11 further permits the consumer to grasp the access opening 34 on the retaining panel 20 and separate the retaining panel with a lifting motion upwardly and away from the sleeve 11. See Figure 5B. The lifting action of the retaining panel 20 causes the bag to fail and provides access to the DVD 13 contained within the polymeric bag 12. See Figure 5C.

[0070] With reference to Figures 6A-6C, and 7, the sleeve 11 formed from the alternative blank 16 permits the consumer to grasp the access opening 34 on the retaining

panel 20 and separate a portion of the retaining panel along the tear lines 51 with a lifting motion upwardly and away from the sleeve 11. See Figure 7. The lifting action of the retaining panel 20 causes the bag to fail and provides access to the DVD 13 contained within the polymeric bag. See Figure 5C.

[0071] In the drawings and specification, there have been disclosed typical embodiments on the invention and, although specific terms have been employed, they have been used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation, the scope of the invention being set forth in the following claims.